



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

ART. IX. — *A Year of Consolation*. By MRS. BUTLER, late FANNY KEMBLE. New York : Wiley & Putnam. 1847. 2 vols. 12mo.

THE invention of that modern figure in the dance of life, the grand tour, of which the trip to Rome is an aliquot part, has wrought a total change in the condition and character of Italy. The annual migration of birds of every feather to the banks of the Tiber, who return to caw, croak, or chatter about the Seven Hills or the Carnival, has reduced that ill-used country to the level of a fashionable watering-place. The classical enthusiasm which we once hung on the reports of those favored pilgrims, who in their own flesh and blood had stood under the dome of St. Peter's, or climbed the sides of the Coliseum, has long since evaporated ; and the journals of travellers in Italy are taken up and laid aside with as little concern as the last trip to Bath, or bulletin from Saratoga.

“Nota magis nulli domus est sua, quam mihi lucus Martis.”

In fact, Italy has been most mercilessly rummaged and ransacked. Not a brook, a glen, or a ruin, not a rite, a pageant, or a saint, not a picture, a column, or a symphony, that has not first been plucked in a hand-book, and then hashed to death, and after death, in what is bitterly called a descriptive style. “That which the palmer-worm hath left, hath the locust eaten ; and that which the locust hath left, hath the canker-worm eaten ; and that which the canker-worm hath left, hath the caterpillar eaten.” That the caterpillar has left something for a future grub, we have no doubt ; for Rome is eternal, and so is human vanity.

Human vanity will doubtless have its way, as it always has done. We, at least, will not presume to quarrel with it. It is as omnipresent as dust ; and to attempt to lay it by beating it is unphilosophical. If Italy has become fashionable, the more 's the pity ; but what will you do about it ? Submit, in the first place ; and then modestly propose a compromise. Cockneys, *parvenus*, and amateurs are as necessary a part, we admit, of the human, as wasps, moths, and musquitos of the insect creation.

They must unquestionably enlighten the sphere they move in ; else how should it be illuminated ? We would only, in the most respectful terms, advise them not to be too lavish of their tapers. If, instead of burning daylight, they will stick to their own firmament, their importance will be none the less apparent, and they can settle the matter amicably with the sun, moon, and stars. Prudent fireflies are noted for keeping proper hours. In a word, we go for a just division of labor. Let the great wits take the great topics, and the little wits take the little topics. Scholarship and taste will be fully satisfied with a quiet corner in this ample field, and flippancy and coxcombry can stray at large over the rest. Under such an arrangement it will cease to be necessary that what has been reverently approached by an Addison or a Goethe should be pertly handled by some conceited spark, who treats Italy as his debtor, and offers Vesuvius an opportunity to smoke in his journal "one day more." He might still dive, we care not how deep, into the mysteries of the Carnival ; but he would spare us the recital of his impressions and emotions in the Sistine Chapel or the Forum.

All this, we are well aware, is stale and musty. Traveling is no longer what it was ; it has caught the subjective tendency of the age. Every body knows about Rome ; that is brute knowledge ; to make it human, we want revelations of feeling. Rome is the city of the soul. Mere description is topographical, physical, sensuous ; feeling is universal, infinite, spiritual. Hence the punctilious minuteness with which the universe is informed, that, on such an hour of such a morning, such a fountain imbibed the tribute of Laura Matilda's tear ; hence the dying cadences in which Amanda Malvina celebrates her swoon at the first sight of a genuine Etruscan vase ; and hence the guardian care with which certain watery stanzas, the fruit of an ill-omened drive on the Campagna, are rescued from the oblivious recesses of Fan-ny's portfolio. All these seductions do not wean us from our antiquated heresy. When 'feeling for all mankind' comes to mean 'feeling that all mankind may know it,' we are superannuated enough to suspect that here also ignorance may be bliss ; and so unchristian, too, as to call to mind the moral to the fable of the chariot and the fly.

The enigmatical and somewhat affected title of Mrs. Butler's volumes does her injustice. In the phrase, "A Year

of Consolation," there is a threat of those gratuitous confidences and revelations, which may be endurable, and even precious, from great men or from characters endeared to us by peculiar ties; but which under other conditions are obtrusive and burdensome. It is in the dialect of that communicative grief which bares its wounds indifferently to the gaze of any one who will pay his paltry dollar for the sight. It savors of the cant of those self-centred tourists in whose inmost souls, as at the gilt pillar in the ancient Forum, all the roads of Italy terminate. Mrs. Butler might have dispensed with an *alias* for her book. The plain words, "Travels in Italy," may have, naturally enough, grown somewhat unmarketable; but they suggest a definite subject; whereas "A Year of Consolation" is as blind as "A Year of Life"; and there is enough in the volumes before us to save them from the fate of the common herd of travels. The book would, indeed, have lost nothing by the suppression of certain dark allusions to private griefs, capriciously interpolated, for the most part in a metrical form, and scarcely intelligible without a biographical commentary.

On the 20th of December, 1845, Mrs. Butler, accompanied only by one female attendant, left Southampton for Rome. On her arrival at Paris, instead of following the main road to Lyons, she took a cross route through Nevers to Chalons-sur-Saone, which had been recommended to her by some friend who had tried it in summer. In midwinter she found it extremely inconvenient, and considerably obstructed by a heavy fall of snow. She seems to have made the most of these scanty materials, and, having been thoroughly frightened, slightly quizzed, and roundly cheated, has worked up her sufferings into a melodramatic romance. The whole account is sufficiently amusing, — partly, it must be confessed, at the author's expense. The extravagant air with which these opening pages are turned off is rather ominous for the simplicity of the rest of the book; but it may be intentional, as it certainly affords some scope for the exercise of powers of description, which Mrs. Butler possesses in no ordinary degree. Nothing escapes her vigilant eye, which is as keen to detect personal peculiarities as to note the beauty of natural scenery. To a quick sense of the ridiculous she joins also a humane interest in the condition of her fellow-men. If to this we must add, among

the traits by which this book is marked, a degree of frankness sometimes rather more than feminine, and in a few cases running almost into coarseness, we shall perhaps surprise no one. If the author chooses to call a spade a spade, she has a right to do so ; but why speak of spades at all ? She wonders that she passes for a brave woman, being, as she says, one of the most cowardly women she ever knew. Yet it is not strange that people should infer bravery from boldness ; and few women, we hope, besides Mrs. Butler, would be bold enough to talk of climbing into a diligence "by three horrid hoes, that scraped my shins to death" ; or even, under the terrors of a Siberian journey in the barbarous wilds of central France, and the vexations of a country inn, to speak of "the devilish conductor and conveyance who had brought me to this horrid hole." The phrase "to blow up," used neither in the pneumatic nor the chemical sense, but with a purely oral application, is introduced by Mrs. Butler with all the ease of a current idiom, and without the apology of quotation.

From Chalons our traveller proceeded to Marseilles, where she was to embark for Italy. Her fellow-passengers in the diligence from Avignon to Marseilles were two French merchants, and the conversation turned on that too familiar subject, the national credit of the United States. We quote her very judicious remarks.

"It is impossible to conceive any thing more painful and mortifying to one, either by birth or adoption an American, than the contemptuous and reproachful comments which any mention of the United States is sure to elicit. The commercial and financial delinquencies of some of the States, but principally of Pennsylvania, have created an universal impression throughout Europe of utter want of faith, honor, and integrity, on the part of the whole nation. The Florentine millionaire, the Lyons antiquary, and these Marseilles merchants, all within three days, have uttered opinions respecting the character of the Americans, which, however mistaken and exaggerated in some respects, have quite foundation enough in fact to occasion bitter annoyance to any one loving America, and wishing to honor her. It is the most difficult thing in the world to make these people comprehend the complex movement of the Federal and State governments, or to explain to them, that while in certain of the States, from real inability, and in others, perhaps, from positive dis-

honesty, the public securities have turned out no securities at all, there exist others, again, whose credit, both financial and moral, is as solid, whose investments are as safe, as any in the world:—it is impossible to make them understand it; the general government appears to them responsible for the State insolvencies. The United States Bank is, to their apprehension, a government institution, instead of a private speculation; and President Polk and Nicholas Biddle, and Pennsylvania, Illinois, Massachusetts, and South Carolina, are all involved together in one broad sentence of national dishonesty and want of faith. If there had been no dishonesty and no want of faith, of course these sweeping judgments could not have gone forth.

“The Americans console themselves for the strictures of Englishmen, by attributing them to national jealousy, envy, or prejudice; but I have heard in France more severe animadversions upon their delinquencies than any since the days of Sidney Smith's indignant addresses to the Pennsylvanians.”—Vol. i. pp. 37, 38.

The edge of this passage is not blunted by the fact that it is from the pen of an Englishwoman. For Mrs. Butler, proud as she is of her English birth, and ever ready to bear witness to the virtues of her countrymen, has lived too long in America to be the slave of the vulgar prejudices on this subject. “I thank God,” she says, “that I was born in England, and shall live in America.” On all occasions she generously acknowledges the merits of our political and social institutions, and if she finds fault with us, does not spare the faults of her countrymen.

On several occasions she is led to compare the manners of Frenchmen with those of Englishmen and Americans. The glorious days of July have, in her opinion, contributed quite as much to freedom of manners among the French people as to any other sort of liberty.

“It is now twenty years since I was in France; and the common opinion of English people, and of the French themselves too, is, that they have very much departed from the affable and courteous manners which were once a sort of national characteristic among them. If my present progress from one end of France to another, in every variety of public conveyance, affords any opportunity of judging, I should certainly incline to that opinion; there appears a total absence of the reference to other people's convenience and pleasure, which certainly formerly did distinguish French people of every class. The desire of

pleasing, which exhibited itself frequently drolly to a stranger, but often in very graceful expressions of courtesy and kindness, appears to have given way to a selfish disregard of others, which manifests itself in a rudeness of deportment quite as offensive as the sullen mixture of pride and shyness which so long distinguished the travelling English, wherever they were met with. While losing the graces of their (perhaps superficial) politeness, the French have acquired none of the decorum and decency of deportment, the absence of which was always severely felt in the midst of their most courteous demonstrations; and while acquiring something of the morose, selfish carriage of our own people, they have failed to adopt one particle either of their cleanliness or propriety of person, language, or manners. Thus, a Frenchman hawks and spits close to your cheek, blows his nose like a trumpet in your ear, and yawns and coughs under your nose. Their language is frequently positively exceedingly indecent, and the tone of it always more or less borders upon what Englishmen would consider unwarrantable freedom. I do not wonder Frenchwomen do not travel much, but I sincerely hope that before long they may be induced to do so, as nothing else, probably, will render Frenchmen tolerable travelling-companions to the women who at present have the misfortune to be thrown in public conveyances into their society. Englishmen are the only men I know who, met thus accidentally on the road, are generally perfectly inoffensive in their persons, manners, language, and deportment: on the other hand, courtesy, civility, or any species of assistance, is not to be expected from them; they will take care not to insult or annoy you, but as for assisting or entertaining their chance companions, that is certainly not their *spécialité*. The very cheap rate of travelling in America, which enables *every body*, without exception, to travel, and the absence of all distinctions of place or price in the public conveyances, which compels *every body* to travel together, of course brings refined and fastidious pilgrims into most painful proximity with their coarse and unpolished brethren; and from the uncouth deportment and strange manners of the lower classes of people from half-civilized districts, infinite annoyance, as well as amusement, is derived by those whom the unrespecting providence of American railroads and steamboats compels to consort with them upon a footing of at least travelling equality; but (and I have said my say in my time upon the subject of American tobacco-chewers, cigar-smokers, and question-askers) a woman cannot possibly travel in any part of the world with equal security as in America; the law of the land — public opinion — secures to women the first choice of accommodation on every road and at

every inn; a look, word, or gesture of intentional impertinence will not assail her, nor a single offensive expression reach her ear, in passing from one corner to another of that vast and half-savage continent. So great and universal is the deference paid to the weaker vessel, indeed, in the United States, that I think the fair Americans rather presume upon their privileges; and I have seen ladies come into crowded steamboats and railroad cars, and instantly assume the seats that have been as instantly resigned by gentlemen upon their entrance, without so much as a gracious word or look of acknowledgment; so certain is the understanding that every accommodation is not only to be furnished, but *given up*, to them, — and this not to young, pretty ladies, but to women old or young, pretty or ugly, — of the highest or the lowest class. Though the virtue on the part of the American men is certainly very great, I think it has made their women quite saucy in their supremacy, and altogether unblushing in their mode of claiming and receiving it. In churches, concert-rooms, and theatres, no man keeps his seat when women appear standing; and on board the splendid steamboats of the North and East Rivers, state-rooms secured by gentlemen alone cannot be retained, if women come on board and desire to have them. This, it must be allowed, is pushing courtesy to the very verge of injustice, and though one of the profiting party, I think this is more than the largest construction of the ‘rights of women’ requires.” — Vol. 1. pp. 40–43.

We quote a paragraph from her journal at Marseilles, because it is a fair specimen of the profuse luxuriance of her descriptive style, and the theatrical manner with which it is now and then unpleasantly checkered.

“Towards three o’clock, Mrs. ——— called for me to drive with her on the Prado. We set forth together, and drove under the golden light of a most glorious afternoon along a fine avenue, planted with trees, and bordered with houses of such various forms and fashions as to redeem, by the agreeable variety of the whole, the slightly fantastic appearance of many of them individually. On each hand a noble range of hills, with clean, sharp outline, scooped the exquisite sky; and at the end the Mediterranean, in all its glory, rolled a sea of molten gold almost to our carriage-wheels. The declining sun burnished the level ocean, so that its proverbial sapphire hue was lost in the blaze of light; wave after wave, as it curved to the shore, upheaved a crystal vault of golden green, through which the sun shone as through a huge wall of the delicate Bohemian glass. The sound, the sight, the present beauty, the intense longing of

many years fulfilled, all combined to excite and touch me most deeply ; the rocky promontories, with their deep-jagged outlines, stony and stern in their unvarying beauty, contrasting with the curving, undulating, yielding, exquisite element at their feet, canopied with that limpid sky, whose richness and softness lent tenderness and brightness to the whole. It was only less beautiful than the moral glory I had contemplated in my conversation in the morning, and I devoutly thanked God for both : O great and good Father, all thy works praise thee ; especially doth the soul of man, thy noblest work, praise thee, when it shows forth thy will and walks in thy way ! As we were turning away for the last time from this scene of enchantment, I could not resist the desire to dip my hands in the clear waves ; and, stopping the carriage, ran down to the shore. The golden waters with their silver fringe rolled in gorgeous sheets up the sand. I gathered one handful of the Nereid's crown that lay at my feet, and having baptized them in one far-reaching wave, ran back with my trophy to the carriage." — Vol. 1. pp. 47, 48.

At Marseilles, our traveller embarked for Civita Vecchia, *viâ* Genoa and Leghorn. After suffering the customary dose of discomfort and extortion, which she has set off in her usual unsparing style, she was safely landed in the patri-mony of St. Peter, and, with no further tribulation than the petty trials of a diligence, arrived in a somewhat way-worn and jaded condition at her sister's residence on the Pincian Mount. The eleven months of her stay in Rome and its vicinity were divided between her city home and a summer retreat at Frascati. A year in Italy is of course a year of sight-seeing ; and, with due allowance for slight differences of taste or variety of profession, all travellers see the same sights. You may here and there find an individual, like Arnold or Sismondi, who neither has nor pretends to have an eye for works of art. Another, looking on the ancient world as *un fait accompli*, sees nothing in Hadrian's Villa, or the Baths of Diocletian, but old rubbish, of which he left enough at home. But few travellers, however heterodox on these points, dare openly to dissent from the established faith ; and, with guide-book in hand, and patient, melancholy feet, plod their weary way around the mill-horse circle prescribed by decency and fashion. Happy the stranger who finds himself at Rome on the death of a pope, or at Naples during an eruption of Vesuvius. Such godsend comes to few. The bulk of foreigners must be satisfied with the

crambe repetitâ, as they can get it. Thanks to the methodical habits of superstition, the seasons are not more inevitable in their return than the reappearance of the pomps and pageants of the Romish Church. The same old ruins, too, remain, with the annual deduction of a hundred or two of bricks, and decay creeps over Raphael's frescos as slowly as on the cheek of an antediluvian beauty, brilliant yet in her fourth century. The luxuriant desolation of the Campagna is the eternal proverb of economists, and the Appian Way will not wear out. A studio more or less may vary the total of objects of interest, and fill a day of the traveller's time or a page of his journal. But nature and art offer nearly the same banquet to every comer, fresh indeed as a sylvan fountain to him that drinks of it, but a little less delightful to absent friends, who partake of it by proxy. Of news, properly so called, that is, of such news as implies the occurrence of an event, or the existence of any shape or spectre of progress, no one dreams in Italy, — or did dream, till within a twelvemonth. How long the black swan of reform will venture to stretch her neck in the presence of the eagle of Austria, Guizot and Metternich must determine. We fear that the loud song of the adventurous bird is ominous of her speedy fate. We congratulate Mrs. Butler and ourselves on the rare luck which found her at Rome at the accession of the good Pope Pius the Ninth. Her narrative of the first events of the new pontificate, written as they occurred, and on the spot, is much the best account we have yet had of a period of great interest, and is altogether the most valuable and entertaining portion of her book.

Observation is Mrs. Butler's *forte*, and she is equally at home in a natural scene, a living group, and the pageantry of a festive day. Her remarks on the national and individual characteristics of the Italians are striking and just, and her hearty way of expressing her liking or aversion gives an agreeable air of honesty to many of her sketches. She is chargeable, it must be owned, in several instances, with an appearance of exaggeration. The description, for example, of the iron-works near Tivoli is quite too Vulcanian for a modern forge. Other passages, we have no doubt, have suffered from too full a brush. Nothing, indeed, is more difficult for a traveller than to write simply even in his private journal. A grand object of nature or art never makes its

total impression at once. Reflection sharpens imagination, and by the time the traveller is ready to make the entry in his journal, he is wound up to a pitch of excitement, which drives him into an overwrought strain of description. His enthusiasm, as the lawyers say, relates back to the moment of actual vision ; and the mind imposes on the senses. This unconscious extravagance is not likely to be subdued by the prospect of publication. Mrs. Butler confesses to "a shallow and easily exhausted fund of reflections." This fund is too often drawn upon. Of the prose portion of the book, nothing is in worse taste than the moral, religious, and sentimental ejaculations, or rhapsodies, which are introduced as episodes or tail-pieces to her spirited sketches. Our censure applies, of course, only to the want of tact and propriety in these passages ; their sincerity we have as little reason as desire to call in question. For these volumes are marked throughout with a religious tone, which commands respect, without seeming to invite it. We recollect but one exception, where the description of a garden is wound up in this manner : — "'There is neither sound nor speech,' &c." The printer should have omitted the character which we have italicized.

We have already alluded to our author's talent for description. Page after page might be quoted in illustration of this. As a fair specimen, we extract a paragraph from the narrative of a visit to Monte Gennaro.

"Upon the very summit of the mountain, above its precipices, its huge sloping shoulders, the dwarf, stunted-shrubbery clinging to its skirts, and the stony rifts opening in its ample sides, lifted up close, as it seemed, to the blue sky and silver clouds, and propped upon the everlasting foundation of the hills, — a long, soft, sunny meadow spread itself ; the turf was more elastic, closer and finer-grained, than that of the most carefully kept lawn, — its color fresh, tender, and vivid. On either side, rising from it with a regular symmetry, that proclaimed beyond mistake their ancient office of banks to the fair lake which once spread itself over this magical carpet of verdure, swelled the softly-rounded mountain crests, which here were covered with a lordly growth of magnificent forest-trees. Over this bright and lovely wilderness, thus high uplifted above the earth's common level, herds of cattle strayed, who, with their keepers, are the only inhabitants of these beautiful solitudes, which during the summer afford them abundant pasturage ; the winter drives

them downwards towards the neighbourhood of man, and leaves these scenes of summer loveliness to the stern dominion of the deep snows that cover them, over whose glittering and forbidding surface the eagle sweeping through the heavens alone throws a living shadow." — Vol. II. pp. 136, 137.

From its place between a filthy sketch of a filthy spot and a theatrical apostrophe, we cull this pretty picture.

"We found ourselves on the very top of the Basilica Maxentia, whose huge, wondrous arches rose beneath us, and seemed now as though they reared themselves so high and vast into the sky only to carry the delicate fantastical foxglove, that sprung out from their rifted brick-work, and nodded its lilac bells at the tiny Roman people down below." — Vol. I. p. 68.

A short passage, at the close of her account of the illumination of St. Peter's, strongly reminds us of Jean Paul.

"Our carriage rolled slowly, or rather waded, through the crowded streets at a foot-pace, and when we came to the Ponte Sisto we beheld another illumination, which turned the pageant we had just seen into a splendid, tawdry toy. The full moon hung above the river in a sea of mellow light, indescribably soft and powerful; the purple line of the Alban hills was distinctly visible against the pearly horizon; while the roses in the gardens, near the bridge, showed their colors as though by day, so potent was the moonlight, — with us, so wan and colorless. Opposite this great and lovely glory, St. Peter's flamed in the distance like a huge gold filigree thimble. The pageant vouchsafed to us nightly is a fine thing; it is well to see it confronting the yearly pageant of the great church of Rome, to be reminded how fine, — what an insensible, brutish, dull, irreverend thing is custom. Coming home, we found a perfect opera congregation of carriages on the Pincio, a sort of Haymarket and King Street row. The view of St. Peter's is very fine from here, and many people had driven up to enjoy it. I went to my stand on the terrace of our charming little garden, and here looked up at the moon and down at St. Peter's, till the rolling wheels had all rattled away, and the shuffling feet all departed, and the sound of the fountain in the Piazza di Spagna came up to answer the tiny tinkle of the fountain in the garden, whose roses and orange-blossoms and thousand cups of incense were sending up fragrance into the night air like prayer." — Vol. II. pp. 6, 7.

Something more, however, is often necessary to make a style picturesque, than exuberant diction or mosaic detail.

Elaborateness itself may crowd and confuse the fancy with a whirl of images, which leave no complete impression behind. Instead of a full and harmonious picture, the mind succeeds in seizing only broken and hazy snatches, like the fragments of an ill-remembered dream. Mrs. Butler sometimes writes as if she thought that luxuriance and variety of scenery demanded similar qualities of style. On the contrary, we believe that the more complicated the object to be represented, the greater is the need of a few simple, suggestive strokes. They must, indeed, be master-strokes ; a great poet reveals more in a line, or even a word, than a feeblar one in a stanza. The account of the rides on the Campagna overflows with single beauties of expression and picturesque points, but fails, as it seems to us, in its general effect. On the other hand, the sketch of the hurly-burly and harlequinade of the Carnival, even to its pathetically ridiculous close, is admirable. In either case the failure and success are easily explained. A landscape may be dissected, and the parts successively ranged before us ; but all the parts put together will not make the whole. Whereas a pageant is made up of successive portions, each of which may be more or less happily described. The original had its consecutive parts, and admits of consecutive exhibition.

We have spoken of our author's singularly keen eye. Indeed, she sees altogether too much, and not only will not shut her eyes, but cannot hold her tongue, — weaknesses for which, it is to be hoped, her sex will forgive her. The physiological remark about fauns and satyrs (Vol. II. p. 34) would have been pardonable in a professedly medical work, — but might have been omitted here, since it is as beggarly in point of wit as of decency. Her account of a friend's experiments (Vol. I. p. 76) on tarantulas is so loathsomely faithful, that she must be believed, when she adds, that "a more disgusting or hateful spectacle cannot be conceived." A lively sketch of the "beautiful beastly creatures," with splendid heads and shoulders, and elf-locks, who lounged on the steps below her lodgings, would have been incomplete, we presume, without a coarse allusion which absolutely crawls on the page. But our author's impartiality is not confined to the sense of vision ; her pages abound in passages which would furnish no inappropriate commentary to Coleridge's epigram on the city of Cologne.

We cannot complain of these volumes for classical or artistical parade. In this respect, they are worthy of all praise. When Mrs. Butler refers to ancient Rome, it is in a natural manner, and almost always without any attempt at fine writing. And this, as any one may see, is not for lack of knowledge or taste. The author frankly owns her want of education as a connoisseur, and gives us her impressions of works of art, not in a dictatorial and conclusive tone, but with great simplicity and moderation. Her interest, indeed, in such objects seems to have increased very rapidly during the closing weeks of her stay at Rome, and she left the Vatican for the last time with tears. Richter says of Raphael, that the first draughts from his magic cup only cool the blood, while the last send a southern fire through all the veins. We believe that this would describe the experience of many of our travellers, if they had Mrs. Butler's frankness to avow it. We think she makes too much fuss about her disgust at artistical representations of physical pain. She absolutely preaches her aversion. We must quote a passage from her journal of a visit to a gallery of sculptures, because of its decided *naïveté*, an article of which there is no glut in these volumes.

"I admired extremely two statues of exquisite grace and beauty, called Mars, and representing the God of War in different attitudes of repose. The ease and nature of the position, the lightness and beauty of the limbs and figure, and the charming expression of perfect quietude thrown over the whole countenance and person, render them certainly the most attractive representations of this divinity that I ever saw. I incline to think the likeness must have been taken during his *liaison* with Venus; there is a softness and almost tenderness about them otherwise unaccountable." — Vol. II. p. 146.

The portion of Mrs. Butler's work which relates to Pius the Ninth and his plans of reform has been already alluded to. The liberal, benevolent, and conscientious character of this Papal prodigy is portrayed very pleasantly and intelligently, and with an enthusiasm which does honor to our author's head and heart. We should be glad, if our limits would allow, to transfer to our pages one or two characteristic sketches and anecdotes.

The poetical pieces, which project from the surface of these volumes with a boulder-like irregularity, require a pass-

ing notice. Too many of them relate so exclusively to the author's private experience and peculiar feelings, that we are astonished that she could ever have thought of publishing them. The heart knoweth its own bitterness, and sorrow parts with somewhat of its sanctity, when it surrenders its privacy. Even the pathetic lines "Upon a Branch of Flowering Acacia," though much more naturally introduced than other pieces of a similar tone, are almost profaned by being cast adrift upon the world. The painful effect of verses of this character is only heightened by their sudden introduction after passages with which they have little apparent connection. So frequent are these monodies, that the cheerful import of the graceful stanzas entitled "*Torre Nuovo*" surprises the reader, who was beginning to wonder what was meant by "*A Year of Consolation*." Generally speaking, Mrs. Butler's poetry is inferior to her prose. It wants compactness and finish. Some of her pieces, however, have considerable merit. "*The Landgraf*," for instance, is excellently versified, and the lines on "*Genius and Love*" are very spirited. We find "*Amphitrite*" and "*Aphrodite*" reduced to trisyllabic dimensions, to meet the Procrustean necessities of English rhyme. We doubt if two so powerful goddesses will take this treatment kindly from one of their own sex.

The close of these volumes is in keeping with the kindly and generous spirit which pervades them.

"On Monday, the 7th of December, I went to the fountain of Trevi, — for those who drink of its sweet waters return, it is said, to Rome. It was a dark and gloomy day, and raining fast; but I knelt, nevertheless, upon the edge of the beautiful fountain to drink to my return.

" DEPARTING.

"Pour we libations to the father, Jove,
And bid him watch propitious o'er our way;
Pile on the household altar fragrant wreaths,
And to th' auspicious Lares bid farewell,
Beneath whose guardianship we have abode.
Blest be the threshold over which we pass,
Turning again, with hands devout uplifted;
Blest be the roof-tree, and the hearth it shelters;
Blest be the going forth and coming home
Of those who dwell here; blest their rising up,
And blest their lying down to holy slumber;

Blest be the married love, sacred and chaste ;
 Blest be the children's head, the mother's heart,
 The father's hope. Reach down the wanderer's staff, —
 Tie on the sandals on the traveller's feet :
 The wan-eyed morn weeps in the watery east :
 Gird up the loins, and let us now depart.

“ On Thursday, the 8th of December, I left Rome.” — Vol. II.
 pp. 170, 171.

ART. X. — *The Knickerbocker, or New York Monthly Magazine*, for June, 1847. Article on Professor C. C. Felton's *Edition of the Agamemnon of Æschylus*. New York : John Allen.

WE have seldom had occasion of late years to make any allusion in this journal to what has appeared in the pages of a contemporary periodical, whether American or foreign. An article in a magazine or a review is at best of but temporary interest, and it is seldom worth while to recur to it, after the lapse of a single week from the time of its publication, for the purpose of explaining, verifying, or refuting its statements. Especially have we avoided any thing like dispute or a protracted discussion of a single topic, either with another public journal, or with a pamphleteer, controversy being as unwelcome to us as it is wearisome or disgusting to most readers. We have not the slightest intention of changing this rule now, or of entering into any debate with the *Knickerbocker* upon abstruse points of philology, or upon the merits of an edition of a Greek classic. Our present object is only to expose the character of an article so remarkable for its violation of the laws not only of politeness, but of decency, for its unprovoked personalities and gross invasion of the sanctity of private life, that the writer of it deserves public rebuke and disgrace. He shall have the notoriety which he seems to covet, so far as the circulation and influence of this Review can give it to him. As he has affixed his initials to the article, and had announced quite generally, some months before its publication, and even, as we happen to know from several independent sources, some